



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

TODD P. GRAVES

Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs • (816) 426-4220 • 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 • Kansas City, MO 64106

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FELON INDICTED FOR ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF FIREARMS

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a felon was indicted by a federal grand jury today for illegally possessing firearms.

Robert Tharp, 37, no permanent address, was charged in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Springfield for being a felon in possession of two firearms.

The federal indictment alleges that **Tharp** was in possession of a High Standard .22 caliber semi-automatic handgun and an RG Industries .22 caliber revolver on Jan. 9, 2004, in Greene County, Mo. Under federal statutes, Graves explained, it is illegal for any felon to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Tharp** has a 2002 criminal felony conviction for possession of methamphetamine, a 1996 criminal felony conviction for distribution of methamphetamine, a 1988 criminal felony conviction for rape, a 1987 criminal felony conviction for escape and a 1985 criminal felony conviction for burglary and stealing.

Graves cautioned that the charges contained in the indictment are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney James J. Kelleher. It was investigated by the Springfield, Mo., Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow